## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-5 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5 are amended without prejudice or disclaimer to remove the multiple dependency claim and to conform with U.S. patent practice. No new matter is contained in these amendments.

Applicants submit the present amendments and remarks, and respectfully request consideration and allowance of the claims.

## Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular the Examiner states that the phrase "characterized in that" and the phrase "and/or" render the claims indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitation(s) following the phrases are part of the claimed invention. The claims have been amended to address these concerns and the rejection should be removed.

The Examiner rejected claim 2 because it recites the limitation "the iodine number" in claim 1, and there is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. The iodine number as claimed refers to an inherent property of the recited unsaturated fats, oils or waxes of natural or synthetic origin, and therefore, antecedent basis is inherent in the claim. In view of this clarification, the rejection is considered moot and the rejection should be removed.

Regarding claim 4, the limitation of "... 1-10% of a substance..." is indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner refer to the specification which has provided sufficient guidance to one of skill in the art as to the meaning of phrases lubricant (page 4 third full paragraph), retanning agent (page 5 last paragraph), and pH regulating substance

(page 5 first full paragraph). In view of this clarification, the rejection is considered moot and

the rejection should be removed.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 3-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated

by Hopkins et al. (US 4,560,386) and by Covington (US 4,937,009). Applicants respectfully

request withdrawal of this rejection. Hopkins et al. does not use the claimed lubricant of the

present invention, i.e., a lubricant in that unsaturated fats, oils or waxes of natural or synthetic

origin are used in the production of said lubricant, which are subjected to an oxidative treatment

prior to further chemical reaction. In example 1, Hopkins only discloses that 2 parts of a weakly

anionic fat liquoring agent based on a fatty acid derivative is used. The entire document is silent

how said fatty acid derivative is produced, i.e., it is not mentioned that said fatty acid derivative

was subjected to an oxidative treatment prior to a further chemical reaction. Consequently, due

to the presence of the specific lubricant in the composition the objected claims 1 and 3-5 should

be novel with respect to Hopkins et al.

With respect to Covington, in the entire specification as well as in the examples, it is not

disclosed that a specific lubricant should be used, i.e., a lubricant in that unsaturated fats, oils or

waxes of natural or synthetic origin are used in the production of said lubricant, which are

subjected to an oxidative treatment prior to further chemical reaction. Moreover, with respect to

example 15 of the Covington patent, sodium bicarbonate was used for depickling the snake skin.

Subsequently, with a fresh float, the snake skin was treated with the lubricant and the tanning

agent. Consequently, said fresh float does not comprise a substance regulating the pH value.

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Due to the presence of the specific lubricant used in the process of making the composition,

claims 1-5 are novel with respect to the disclosure of Covington.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over

Hopkins, et al. and Covington. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection. The

distinguishing feature of the presently claimed liquid agent is its manufacture with the use of a

specific lubricant, whereby unsaturated fats, oils or waxes of natural or synthetic origin are used

in the production of said lubricant, which are subjected to an oxidative treatment prior to further

chemical reaction. As already mentioned, neither Hopkins et al. nor Covington disclose the use

of said specific lubricant. As a consequence, a person skilled in the art would not be motivated

by the teaching of said documents to use the specific lubricant of the present invention to solve

the technical problem underlying the present invention. As a consequence, the presently

amended set of claims involve an inventive step. Since claim 2 is based on claim 1, objected

claim 2 involves an inventive step.

Moreover, the examples of the present application demonstrate that the composition of

the present invention is an unobvious improvement over the compositions known in the prior art,

providing finished leathers with notable softness, grain crack resistance and even dyeing. Given

the historically long-felt need to improve leather tanning products and the processes by which

they are made, and the lack of any suggestion for products made with the materials as presently

claimed, the invention can not be fairly said to be obvious. Therefore, Applicants respectfully

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assert that the technical effects of the present invention were not obvious to a person skilled in

the art when reading the disclosure of Hopkins et al. or Covington. Consequently, the present

invention involves an inventive step with respect to the prior art cited by the Examiner, and the

rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at 404-853-8081 if doing so

will facilitate prosecution of the application. The additional fee of \$110.00 is included for a one

month Petition for an Extension of Time and are thought sufficient for this matter. However, the

Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees due or credit any overpayment

to Deposit Account 19-5029.

espectfully submitted,

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